



# THE REED

February, 2006

## Newsletter of The Garden State Harmonica Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 122, Ridgewood, NJ 07451

"For the Elevation and Advancement of the Harmonica"

We meet on the second Friday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., at The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer  
Maywood and Taplin Aves., Maywood, NJ ● email: jbgndlb@aol.com

**Next meeting: Friday, Feb. 10, '06**

*Deadline For Reed Articles...23rd of each month*

### Board of Directors

**President *Pro Tem***.....Joe Dobish  
**Vice President**.....Bob Kuchar  
**Treasurer**.....Steven Hughes  
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**Bookings**.....Henry Young

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**Hospitality**.....Judy Toker  
**Sunshine**.....Dottie Pispecky  
**Publicity**.....Monroe Heide  
**Festival Chairman**.....Shelly Lulov

## Club Presidency

As REEDers and active GSHC members know, Monroe Heide has decided not to continue as club president, a position he ably filled for two years. Joe Dobish has accepted temporary presidency. ("Temporary" is English for *pro tem*.)

A committee of the trustees has been meeting to find a candidate to fill the post permanently...well, for a couple of years, anyway!

## Dues, yet again!

Dues for 2006 are due. If you have not sent them in, please do it now. Dues are still \$20, and are payable from January 1st to March 31st. You will not receive *The REED* or other announcements after March if we don't receive your dues. So there!

**By the way**, when you send in your dues, please remember that we also need the Renewal Form on page 6, to make sure you are credited for having paid. As before, the back of it is blank (more or less!), so you don't lose any of our precious news! Your 2006 Membership Card will be sent as soon as we get your dues.

## Letter from Stan Harper

*It's a point of pride for your editor that eminent player Stan Harper actually reads The REED. After our January issue, Stan wrote us the following...beginning with good wishes for the New Year. We learned several things about harmonica history...such as when the pushbutton chromatic appeared, something we and many others have always wondered about. Below is Stan's letter.*

I'm so glad you did that two-part story on Dave Macklin. Dave is a fine human being had has done much for the harmonica and its players.

I must have been 13 or 14 when I first met him. He was running Borrah Minevitch harmonica contests in movie theaters. That's also where I met Charlie Leighton; we competed against each other. Charlie and Joe Jass, who became the arranger for the 7 Philharmonicas after Dave Macklin put them together, played "Daybreak Express". We split the prize; we each got a Minevitch chromatic.

Dave also conducted harmonica classes at Wurlitzer's Music Store and Auditorium on 42nd St., between 6th and 7th Aves. in NY. He did this for no fee or charge to the boys who attended; I was one. *Continued on page 3.*

## Caltabellotta's Double Life

It certainly was news to your editor to learn that Phil Caltabellotta had just returned from Singapore, where he performed as lead player with the "Yellow Pine Harmonica Trio". We hadn't the slightest inkling that he was a member of this second group. Is there a third or fourth, Phil?

In any event, perform he did. The announcement is at right. If you can't read the rave review, it says: "A superb group each member of which a master in his own area/ Absolutely outstanding performance/too rare to be missed Uniquely captivating." Don't blame the editor for the English, but it's better than our Chinese.

The back of the card says this about the trio:

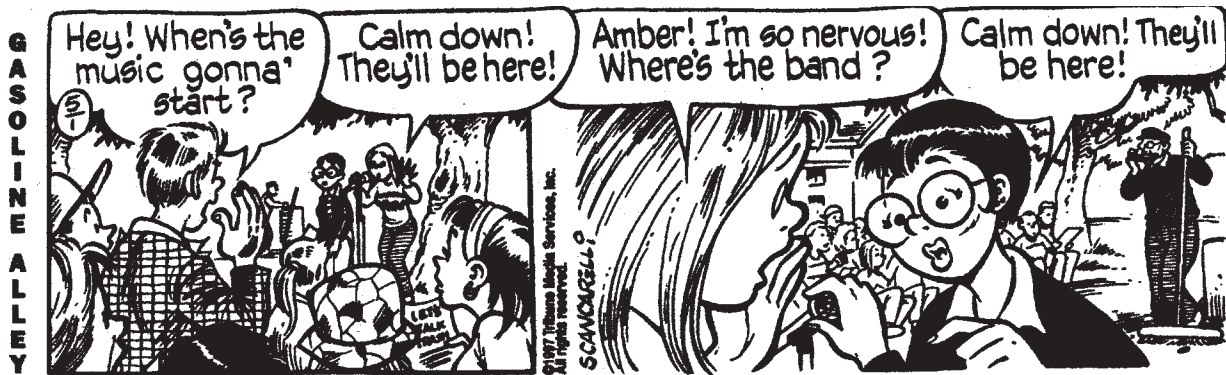
*Bud Boblink* is an entertainer/musician who blends music, comedy, and a whole lot more into a delightful one-man show (or, in this case, a three-man show!). He first toured Europe and the Far East as a professional harmonica player when he was only 18. As a world-renowned harmonica virtuoso, Bud is a soloist but also has performed with many noted artists including The Harmonicats, Johnny Puleo's Harmonica Gang, and the Mike Hanley Trio. In "retirement", he plays with the Jammercats ...and with Yellow Pine Harmonica Trio.

*Frank Warner* is a bass (and other) harmonica player, who has played with Bud (and other former YPH Fest judges) many a time and has impressed the crowds with his finesse the last few years. Frank began playing harmonica at the age of 5 and has played professionally with many groups, including The Original Harmonica Sounds, The Electra-Monicas, The Harmonica Masters, and The Harmonica Rascals. He is also a veteran of TV, radio, and other recordings. He's an elegant Southern gentleman and a great musician.

*Phil Caltabellotta* is a lead player from New York who will be returning to YPH for his fourth year! Phil began playing harmonica at age 7 and

boned up on Harmonicats records as a young man. As a professional, he's played with The Harmonikings, The Electra Harmonica Trio, and now The Yellow Pine Harmonica Trio.

With all his globeterotting, Phil hasn't neglected The Society Boys. They recorded a show on "Wes Houston Presents", which was aired on January 21 over Nassau Cable Vision Public Access Television, Queens Public Access Television (QPTV), and Time Warner Cable. A CD of the broadcast is available at their website, [www.societyboys.com](http://www.societyboys.com), or direct from Shelly. And, by the way, Phil tells us the the guy at left above, Yew Hong-Chow, is no mean player either.



### Can Pete Pedersen Save the Day?

It has been your editor's privilege to know many of the great artists of the harmonica. But among those whom he did not know was Pete Pedersen, who passed away a few years back. By reputation, however, we know that he was a Minevitch "Rascal" and a founding member of The Don Henry Trio, with whom he played lead on their recording of Khachadourian's "Saber Dance", the fame of which, in its day, was probably second only to that of The Harmonicats' "Peg".

Pete was apparently a good friend of Jim Scancarelli, the great "Gasoline Alley" man.

And it came to pass that Jim S. featured Pete P. in a series of 12 episodes. We show No. 1 above.

In this first appearance, a group of high-schoolers are concerned because the rock group they are expecting to hear has not shown up; they are worried about what they are going to do for music.

This looks like a job for Pete Pedersen! And sure enough, he's at the far right (with no telephone booth, however). Will he leap into the breach? Will he avert disaster? Will this ominous situation end happily?

Stay tuned for further developments!

*Stan, continued from p. 1*

Dave, among his many faculties, had one that was amazing. No matter what you wanted to know about how to play a particular harmonica effect or technique—even if he could not do it himself—he knew how it was done and could teach it to you.

I remember one day, after one of Dave's sessions at Wurlitzer, he and I were standing on the 42nd street platform of the IRT (Interborough Rapid Transit) subway and I asked him how to do the fast roll that Fuzzy Feldman did with the Rascals. He told me exactly how it was done. A few years later, Fuzzy and I became good friends.

Fuzzy, who invented chord rhythm playing in the harmonica band, couldn't tell you how he did anything. He was a natural and just did it. He couldn't read music. Fuzzy, incidentally, was given an early 48 chord by Hohner while the Rascals were in Germany. He thanked them, then had it cut up. He didn't like any chords he couldn't pull from his pockets or hold in his fingers. He didn't need all the chords: he had what we called a "dead chug". He'd take

a 10-hole regular-tuned chromatic and play rhythm on it, so "deadened" that you just heard the rhythm, not the tonality.

Sam A. Perry was mentioned in another REED article. I never knew him, but Lou Delin(sky), also a Minevitch player and a close friend of mine, did.

Perry's original harmonica band was started in the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum (the HOA), home to Lou, to conductor and composer Edwin Franko Goldman, and to New York Philharmonic trumpet great Jimmy Smith. [Max Farage, who told us last month's story, also lived there, which ties right in...Ed.] The Diamond brothers, Leo and Abe, came from the Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum.

It is quite true that the name "Rascals" came into being some time after the act started. In fact, when Johnny Puleo joined the group, it was as a player. The comedy fell into being little by little. I have an early photo of the act, taken on the roof of the Wm. Moore agency. Johnny is standing on a bench so he appears as tall as the other boys.

*Concluded on p. 4*

The groups were given harmonicas by William Haussler, Hohner's General Manager. Haussler knew the harmonica; it was he who invented and patented the inside "diaper-pin" spring for the chromatic. The original spring was outside and superior. Haussler's was cheaper and faster to install (in Haussler's patent, it was on the left side of the body).

Haussler also devised the solo tuning for the 10-hole chromatic, so you could play the chromatic scale down to the first hole. For years, it was called "Haussler tuning".

It was Haussler, on behalf of Hohner, who hired Sam A. Perry, a native of Austria with a degree from the Royal Academy of Music, to teach the boys at the HOA. Perry did not play the harmonica, but he understood it. He did not expect his reading system to replace the true reading of music. It was just a quickie thing so the kids would keep playing until he could teach them to truly read music.

He taught the boys from 1926 to 1928, when he left to become Musical Director for Universal Pictures until his death in 1936. He scored many films, including "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "Phantom of the Opera".

He also adopted one of the boys from the home.

Incidentally, I owned two of the original chromatics. They came in a black wood box with white printing that said "M. Hohner's Chromonica—The First and Only Chromatic Harmonica". The came out about 1919 and had



*Original type of  
Hohner Chromatic  
... with outside spring.*

a white bottom celluloid piece in the slide assembly and very long reeds and the outside spring. I tuned one to A. I played them for years and never blew out a reed. I guess these were produced before built-in obsolescence.

I finally gave them to Jerry Murad for his collection.

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### Cupo Strikes Again!

You all remember the picture at the right, of our own Vince Cupo serenading the little kid.

Well, not only was the music terrific, but the picture won a photography prize as well. It has been displayed in Washington DC, and is now part of a traveling exhibit, to be shown at hospitals nationwide. It was taken by Steve Hockstein of Montclair.



## Writing Music, computer style

Last month, we talked about music notation, saying that many people have tried to come up with a better system than the one now in use. We stated that there is not much hope for a new system (even if better) because just about everything is written in standard music.

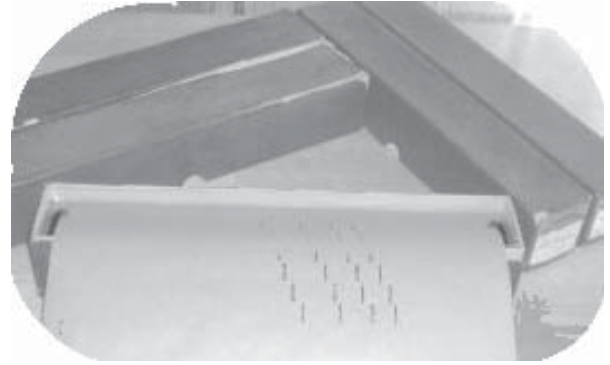
However, one new system has been brought about by the computer, and anyone (such as your editor) who writes or arranges on the computer probably uses it (along with standard notation, however).

It's called "piano roll".

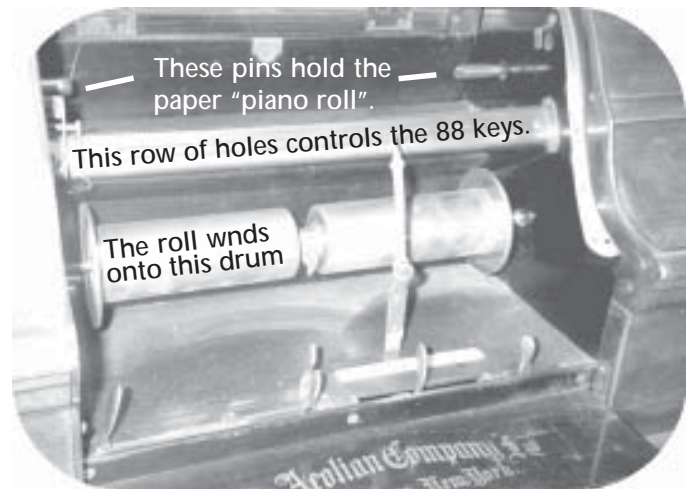
Most of us can remember the player piano. It looked much like a regular piano, except that there were two bellows which you operated with your feet. These produced suction that a) powered an "engine" which reeled a long perforated strip of paper called a "piano roll" and b) sucked the piano roll against a row of openings (looking something like a harmonica!), each opening corresponding to one piano key. There were holes in the paper, and, when a particular paper hole arrived over an opening in the row, it broke the suction, which operated that piano key via a small bellows. Maybe the accompanying pictures will make it clearer.

Most of today's computer music writing programs include a screen image called a "piano roll view". It will probably never replace regular notation but, for the writer of music, it is easier to operate: you can move notes around and change their start times

*Continued on page 6.*



A paper "player piano roll" and its box



"Guts" of a player piano: there's plenty more to it that you can't see, of course.

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## Dues (\$20) are due!

*(Continued from page 1)*

Please note!! Those who joined the club after Oct. 1st, and paid 2005 dues, need not pay again until 2007.

A final word: Our membership has been slipping of late; in 2004 we ended up with 97 members. If you know of anyone who is interested in the harmonica, whether beginner or expert, please pass the word along. Maybe we can reverse this discouraging trend.

If you haven't sent in your dues,  
please be sure to use the form  
on the reverse side and  
**Do It Now!**

**February Birthdays:**

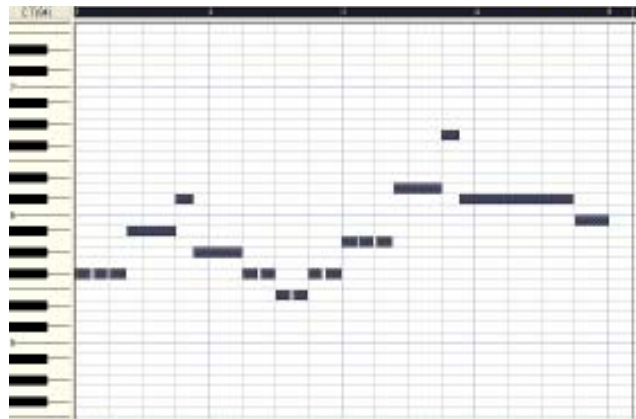
Bob KLannon	Norm Dobson
Fred Van Wetering	Tad Baker
Alvin Davis	Vera Fagley
Dottie Pispecky	

*Computer Music...from page 5.*

and duration more easily than in standard notation. Of course, the program converts it to standard form once you're finished composing.



**Above** is a one line of an arrangement written by your editor years ago when we still used a pen. **Below** is the same phrase in computer "piano roll"



The computer "piano roll" is read from left to right, like regular music

**And here below**, as it is finally converted to standard notation by the program.



It certainly beats getting ink on your fingers, and we do believe that the "piano roll" display is here to stay. (Only for writing, of course, not playing.) Maybe David Macklin, who teaches computer music writing, will have a comment...?

Incidentally some GSHC'ers may also re-member the "Rolmonica" which brought the "piano roll" principle to the harmonica. We show one here. It also used a paper strip, passing over the holes of a built-in harmonica. The player simply blew into it and turned the crank (we believe it was "blow and draw", but played the same note either way). There were both diatonic and chromatic models, though we're not sure that the latter could play a full chromatic scale...perhaps only F# and Bb; any REEDer know the answer?



**GSHC Dues Renewal Form**

*Please make checks out to GSHC and send to:* Garden State Harmonica Club

New Member                       Renewal  
 Cash                                       Check

Att: Membership  
P.O. Box 122,  
Ridgewood, NJ 07451

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(If the information below has changed since last time, please print the proper corrections)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday(**mo/day**) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday(**mo/day**) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Anniversary (**mo/day**) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in joining a committee? If so, which? \_\_\_\_\_



For GSHC use only:

Membership \_\_\_\_\_ President \_\_\_\_\_ Reed \_\_\_\_\_ Sunshine \_\_\_\_\_